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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 81ST CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Happy Hobbying in Wisconsin

Leisure Activities Help Youngsters,
Adults, Veterans, Blind Folks

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

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OF WISCONSIN

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Friday, October 14, 1949

Are hobbies important? Do arts and crafts work, postage stamp collection, photography, bird raising, model railroads, antique collection, and hundreds of other types of avocations—do they really count?

This is a question which many folks might ask themselves in this atomic age. To some folks, it might seem strange that tens of millions of Americans devote a lot of time in their den or in their attic workshop or cellar or photographic dark room to these leisure-time activities, while all the world is so seriously concerned about major international problems.

Yet, the very fact that Americans do have these leisure-time pursuits symbolizes our wonderful standard of living. A portrait of an American puttering in a rose garden symbolizes the pursuit of happiness of Mr. Average Man, John Jones, and Mrs. Average Woman, Mary Jones, and by our youngsters. It symbolizes the fact that this country recognizes the priceless right of each individual to enjoy himself in the way he best sees fit.

Recognizing those facts, many of my senatorial and congressional colleagues and I are glad to devote whatever limited time is available to fulfilling requests from hobbyists in our home States, particularly when the process serves important functions like aid to disabled veterans, to the blind, prevention of juvenile delinquency, etc.

FIRST THINGS IN LEGISLATION COME FIRST

Of course, not much legislative time is available and, as every citizen agrees, first things necessarily come first. As our people know, there are over 10,000 bills pending before the Congress covering hundreds of crucial subjects affecting American peace and prosperity. These, of course, are our

primary concern. Mail on them runs to hundreds of letters per day.

FIFTH ANNUAL HOBBY EXPOSITION IN MILWAUKEE

Yet, I am glad to call attention to hobbying because I feel that it is so important in the free American way of life.

I am happy, particularly, to mention this subject because my own State of Wisconsin has been in the fore of avocational encouragement. In Milwaukee Auditorium from November 24-27, there will be held the fifth annual Wisconsin hobby exposition. This is a nonprofit civic, State-wide educational exposition designed to promote interest in hobbies and recreational activities for boys and girls, men and women. Community leaders always go all-out in their efforts to make this show a certain success. I know their effort is repaid a hundredfold by the wholesome influence it has on the attendants of the show. If any of my colleagues or readers are in the vicinity of the Badger State during Thanksgiving week, I know they won't want to miss our fifth annual Wisconsin hobby exposition.

HOW CONGRESSMEN ARE IN CONTACT WITH HOBBYING

My colleagues and I have almost continuous contacts with hobbying in at least four ways:

1. We receive mail, phone calls, and visits from hobbyists from our State or district on hobby matters and legislation.
2. Occasionally, we speak to vital organizations like the Red Cross, the YMCA's, and YWCA's, library groups, church groups, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H groups—all of which encourage the arts and crafts.
3. We have contacts with businessmen who serve the hobby trades.
4. Many of us, insofar as our limited time will allow, enjoy ourselves in personal avocations.

CONSIDER THE INDEX OF AMERICAN DESIGN, FOR EXAMPLE

Yes, hardly a day goes by here in the Senate that my colleagues and I do not have some contact with one or more hobby topics. Thus, I may receive mail from such organizations as the American Angora Rabbit Breeders Cooperative, or a phone call answer

may come from the Smithsonian Institution informing me of an exhibit they are having, or some Wisconsinite may drop up from the National Art Gallery to tell me about a Badger item in the Index of American Design. (This Index includes native American patterns and prints from the earliest log-cabin days plus fascinating imported items like the intricate designs of decorated German style beer mugs.)

Indeed, we have contact with hobbying not only in our own offices but on the Senate floor when legislation comes up, affecting hobbies, for example, commemorative-stamp policy, tariff bills affecting hobby items, postage-rate bills, etc.

NOMINALLY PRICED HOBBY PUBLICATIONS AND FREE GPO LIST

Naturally, we in the Congress are glad to be of service to our hobbying constituents. Sometimes this can be done by the sending of appropriate literature. Of course, we all appreciate the fact that most sizable Government publications must bear a charge, because alert hobbyists know how heavy is Uncle Sam's financial burden.

The Government Printing Office keeps my colleagues and myself informed of various booklets which it and other agencies issue on hobby topics. In fact, the GPO has summarized a list of its principal hobby booklets in a free leaflet entitled, "What Is Your Hobby?" Incidentally, this free list is so popular that it has gone into its fifth edition.

LIST OF A FEW FEDERAL HOBBY BOOKLETS

And while I am mentioning pamphlets, let me point out specifically some other representative literature (mimeographed or printed) available from Federal agencies upon request. The address to which to write is in all instances Washington 25, D. C.

List of Books on Angling and Fishery Equipment, Fishery Leaflet 218, 7 pages, Fish and Wildlife Service; free.

Publications on Cage Birds, Wildlife Leaflet 285, 11 pages, Fish and Wildlife Service; free.

Growing Crops Without Soil, Bureau of Plant Industry, Department of Agriculture; free.

Maps, Their Care, Repair, and Preservation, 45 pages, Card Division, Library of Congress; 30 cents.

Some Tropical Aquarium Fishes, Fishery Leaflet, 165, 16 pages, Fish and Wildlife Service; free.

Mechanical Practice (about radio tinkering), 82 pages, Government Printing Office; 15 cents.

Roses for the Home, Farmers Bulletin, 750, 34 pages, Government Printing Office; 10 cents.

Etching of Designs and Lettering on Metals, Letter Circular LC 952, 12 pages, National Bureau of Standards, Washington 25, D. C.; free.

United States Government Motion Pictures, 104 pages (lists moving-picture reels that

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can be rented from the Federal Government), Government Printing Office, 40 cents.

Twentieth Century Poetry in English (a catalog listing records, available for purchase by the public, of great poets reading selections of their own poetry), 12 pages, Recording Laboratory, Division of Music, Library of Congress; 5 cents.

WISCONSIN'S FINE FOLK MUSIC COLLECTION

Incidentally, while I am on the matter of recordings, I might mention the folk-music collection of the Library of Congress. Its central collection of American folk music recorded on the scene throughout America is an adjunct of regional archives administered locally.

It is with pride that I note that the music department of the University of Wisconsin was the first to cooperate with the Library of Congress in that aim.

SENATOR WILEY'S FOLK MUSIC BROADCASTS

On several of my radio broadcasts, I have had played folk tunes recorded right in Wisconsin—a Polish dance, a Swiss yodel, a German lied, a Norwegian schottische, as sung by real Badgers who recall the lovely melodies of the Old World. And, too, I've played tunes like the Dying Wisconsin Soldier, a plaintive Civil War folk song as recorded in Berlin, Wis.

We in the Badger State are particularly proud of the Old World cultures from which most of us derive. When our dad or granddad or mom came here, invariably they brought with them the arts and crafts like Norwegian rose-maling of their native hearths. These avocations have been passed on down through the years.

HOBBIES CAN BE PROFITABLE, TOO

As I have previously indicated, a real advantage of hobbies is that they help keep our economy and our standard of living on a high level by providing the hobbyist with a commodity or an ability that he or she can sell. Thus, the aim of one of the leading publications in the hobby field—the Profitable Hobbies magazine—is to help the individual make his hobby a profitable one. Articles tell how John Jones earns a profit by selling his hand-carved wooden figures, or Mary Jones supplements her income by teaching canaries to sing or perform tricks, thus encouraging the readers to earn a profit from their favorite hobby. The very fact that Profitable Hobbies has a regular Washington column and correspondent indicates the fact that our Nation's Capital is a hobby news making center in addition to the more crucial domestic and foreign news it originates.

MANY BUSINESSES SELL HOBBY TOOLS

Hobbies involve a tremendous amount of business volume as any look at the advertisements in daily newspapers, magazines, or particularly hobby magazines will show. Literally thousands of workers are engaged

in Wisconsin and other States' business enterprises, small and large, designed to make available avocational tools and supplies for pleasure to their fellow men.

HOW HOBBIES AID HEALTH AND VETERANS' WELFARE

One great advantage of hobbies, as has been previously pointed out, is their great benefit to people who are mentally or physically ill, folks with nothing interesting to keep them occupied, as well as people who have no sense of contributing, of being useful. The fact that hobbies can help such people, even heal such people, has been proven by the wonderfully constructive work done by the Red Cross Arts and Crafts organization, by the Goodwill Industries, Inc., by the Division of the Blind in the Library of Congress, and, along a different line, by such fine youth groups as the Boy Scouts, the Metropolitan Police Boys Clubs, the YW and YMCA's, as well as the YW and YMHA's.

There is hardly a town or hamlet in our great United States that hasn't heard of the magnificent work the Red Cross does by helping our sick and discouraged veterans back to health. Paraplegics with useless legs are taught to hammer metal into beautiful designs and utilitarian objects, so that they strengthen and use the upper parts of their bodies while at the same time they gain a sense of satisfaction from the metal objects they make. The deafened may be taught the fine art of photography so as to sharpen their sense of sight, while the mentally ill may be taught to relax and keep calm through the love of music.

THE FINE WORK DONE BY GOODWILL INDUSTRIES

Organizations, such as the Goodwill Industries, Inc. (which is, of course, well represented in my own State of Wisconsin), do work along a slightly different line, but equally constructive and valuable. Started back in 1902 in Boston, this organization today consists of over 90 local organizations which provide about 20,000 jobs annually to disabled people reconditioning toys, clocks, clothes, and so forth, for which they are paid about five and one-half million dollars annually in wages. Goodwill further widens the circle of its benefits by cooperating with State vocational rehabilitation services and the Veterans' Administration in helping to train the handicapped in a useful occupation. A particular reason for mentioning Goodwill along with hobbies is because they teach their disabled hobby-type occupations—woodcraft, needlecraft, toy craft, leathercraft, clock mechanics, and so on.

HOW HOBBIES AID THE BLIND

Hobbies are a great comfort to folks who live perpetually in darkness—our blind. The Division of the Blind of the Library of Congress has done a tremendous piece of work in this connection by distributing thousands of "talking books" and books in braille all over the country. These books are a hobby in themselves, since reading is considered

one of the most popular hobbies of all. In addition, these books open the way up to new hobbies by describing such topics as knitting, fishing, ceramics, and other such hobbies that the blind can learn.

CURBING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

Along a somewhat different line is the invaluable work done to prevent juvenile delinquency in our young folk. Boy Scout groups teach our youth to tie knots, to create beautiful wallets, belts, and other objects in leather, to cook and bake in the outdoors, to become acquainted with nature's flora and fauna, and to participate in other wholesome, healthful activities with clean-minded, clean-spirited young friends.

Metropolitan Police Clubs, the Y's and other such groups too numerous to mention, carry out hobby activities along a somewhat different line, but their aim and achievements are the same—to build our youth of today into the leaders of tomorrow. Incidentally, I might mention that our Federal and State prisons from time to time have contacted me personally to request information and booklets on hobby activities for the inmates of their institutions.

HOBBYISTS PERFORM VITAL INTERNATIONAL AND EMERGENCY DUTIES

Few folks need be told how hobbyists aid Uncle Sam in times of war, during civilian emergencies and disasters and in other national and international matters. Thus, it is a generally accepted fact that the technically able "hams" or amateur radio operators formed the backbone of the armed services radio corps. So valuable were their services during the war that a Military Amateur Radio System (MARS) has been established as part of the National Guard, the ROTC, and the Organized Reserve Corps, vital elements of our present peacetime military program.

Another great service performed by hams is for no less a vital organization than the United Nations. Through the fine medium of the International Amateur Radio Union, hams have been relaying United Nations news bulletins around the world. Over 2,000 hams are signed up as UN Amateur Radio Aides. Through the use of K2UN, the United Nations Amateur Station at Lake Success, they keep the airwaves humming 6 to 8 hours a day with vital international messages. As if these two national and international contributions were not sufficient, hams are also of great help in times of national emergency and disaster, such as flood, earthquake, typhoon or tornado, and so on. Many a life has been saved by the Johnny-on-the-spot ham who sent urgent messages for help over his radio outfit.

OTHER HOBBIES PROMOTE GOOD WILL

Other hobbies are beneficial in national and international matters. Thus, the stamp hobby helps create international good will by acquainting hobbyists with facts about foreign countries, their customs, their re-

ligions, their leaders, their history, their shrines, and so on. The collecting of autographs and historical documents has a similar salutary effect for much the same reasons. The same holds true for the collection of foreign dolls, or of old books, of old laces, of silver and china. A greater appreciation of our Indian problem is the result of the collection of Indiancraft, while understanding problems comes about from such hobbies as fishing and hunting, collecting of birds eggs, imitation of bird whistles, study of flora and fauna, etc.

MODEL AVIATION VITAL IN THIS AIR AGE

Model airplane enthusiasts have long been recognized as real contributors to our civilian and military air progress, while the tinkerer or amateur inventor has been responsible for some highly valuable inventions. Along the same lines, the hobbyist who raises bees, Angora rabbits, Angora goats, gamecocks, mink, chinchilla, domestic fox, badgers, and other such animals, has helped these industries progress far more rapidly than might otherwise have been possible.

There are, of course, numerous other reasons why the hobbyist should be saluted and why I personally always try to give as much attention in a crowded day as possible to avocational matters raised by my constituents.

CONGRESSMEN HAVE HOBBIES, TOO

The heavy schedule of a Congressman does not, of course, permit much leisure time for

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their own pursuit of hobbies. However, as some of my colleagues put it, the very heaviness of that schedule (an 80-hour work-week) sometimes requires that a hobby be practiced so as to provide an outlet for the tensions that are built up. Many of our national magazines and newspapers have written up the wood-carving hobby of Congressman WALT HORAN, Senator MARTIN's collection of Currier and Ives prints, Congressman BOYKIN's rescue of dogs in pounds, etc.

SENATOR WILEY'S CHEESE RECIPE HOBBY

My own hobby comes about as the result of the fact that my home State of Wisconsin is the biggest and best cheese producing State in the Union. Its tempting, tasty, nutritious, delicious cheeses are known throughout the world. So, you've probably guessed it. My hobby is collecting and concocting cheese and other dairy recipes.

CONCLUSION

Well, in answer to my opening question, hobbyists do count even in the Atomic Age, in fact, especially in the Atomic Age.

If but a few of the peoples who are caught behind the iron curtain could see John Jones, average American, working at his metal working hobby, or having fun in any other type of way, I think that these folks in lands across the seas would have a better idea of the priceless blessings that Americans enjoy.

Good luck, hobbyists.